

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

WHAT IS THE REAL ORIGIN OF THAT PHRASE.

The Northern Legend Contrasted With the Earlier Southern One—What a Time I Had in Wrestling With the Muse—The Result.

(For the Times.)

During the past few days we have had a delightful taste of the season when nature seems to hesitate between the warm embraces of summer and the cold bonds of winter. The trees, which two weeks ago were gayly decked in honor of the general harvest home, have taken on their sombre hues, and their scantily-clad branches bear witness to their unselfish efforts to protect the roots of tender shrubs and grasses from the visitation of cold rains and sheets and colder winds. The nights are frosty, the sky at evening is beautifully tinted by the sun, and the smoky haze, which almost disappears at mid-day, rises thick about the horizon in the morning and afternoon, and reddens the sunlight, which seems to fall slantwise across the withered grass. Nature, though a master of art, has had a touch of the infirmities of her childhood, ill-assisted for a brief period from the clutches of the cruel, lusty Kubanobokha by the dexterity of her champion, Shingibus, she turns gracefully toward the south, whereof she is now the sunbird, the south wind, who has within his wings the fire, and though its heat cannot be felt, she enjoys the perfume of his smoke which fills the air, and by its dreamy influence produces in man, beast, bird, and insect, one kind of spring. Man for a time has a tendency to return to the bold, carefree life of his original savagery, and to become natural again.

While Indian summer continues everybody and everything will enjoy for at most it is uncertain—well-protected. The origin of the name is doubtful. The weight of opinion is strengthened by custom, inclining to the belief that the pleasant balmy weather in October or November succeeding the first heavy frosts and preceding the Indian summer is due to the Indian's own efforts. For the exclusive possession of the valley prairies and woodland, when men carried their arms to church with them, and were anxious to keep their houses and families when, for any cause, they were absent. At that time, however, the severity of winter guaranteed the southern security from Indian attacks. In the spring and early fall the plowmen were obliged by fear of savages to remain within the narrow cover of the fort, but when war approached they removed to their farms and engaged busily in preparations for the cold weather. But, as Kercheval writes: "It sometimes happened after the apparent onset of winter that the warmer air came with such suddenness that the Indians could enter the fort, and the Indians were driven back."

For some time I tried to harmonize if possible the two conflicting poetical origins of Indian summer. Finally I appealed to the Muse, and after much entreaty and deep devotion, she allowed me to evolve the following version, inspired entirely because in the metre of Longfellow's poem:

When the powerful Sheoneh-wa,
With his hand on the earth,
When the Valley of Virginia
Was the battle-ground for red men,
Fighting for their country, and
Struggling with the white men,
Then was named the Indian summer.
Named in fear, in grief, in anguish,
And in the sweat of his brow,
Till the grain was fully garnered,
Indians wage relentless warfare,
Fierce and fierce, with iron fingers,
Set the woods afire with color,
Gave the grizzly, bear, and chestnut,
Hursed the melody of song birds,
To the mountains fled the warriors,
To the hills, to the rocks, to the ledges,
Lured to darker thoughts of vengeance,
Harassed settlers left their strongholds,
Sought the shelter of the woods,
Left the trusted flint-lock, and
Drove the cattle into barnyard,
Harvested fields scanty crop,
Bitter the taste of the snow flakes,
Took the south wind, slowly blowing,
Through the draw, smoke-wreathed,
With a sharp, cold touch of winter,
From the first touch of winter,
Started south to greet the sunshine,
Sifted red by haze and swelling,
Wrote the name of death bitter,
Nailed it to the heart of the sun,
Took the life of the Indian spring time,
Called the settler's heart with terror;
For the Indian, fast returning,
From the north, with his tomahawks,
From the stand, the Altehantes,
Fell upon defenseless women,
Cried the tomahawk, and
Held the scalps with reeking scalp locks,
Came the torch to burn and scorching,
Carried scalps into homes,
Worse than death, death was bitter,
Nailed it to the heart of the sun,
Took the life of the Indian summer,
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Finally I framed the Virginia legend in the metre of Longfellow's poem:

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MAINE POEM.

Buena Vista's First Lot Sale.

To-day Buena Vista, Virginia, the famous new town of the old State, the first to come to the front, the grand new era in development opened on the largest scale, unparalleled in its progress, to-day takes up the cudgels of industrial energy; to-day this splendid young city is the center of the nation's public sale of lots.

RICHMOND, VA., Nov. 8.—No offerings of tobacco at auction on "Change Saturday," November 8, 1890.

RICHMOND TOBACCO EXCHANGE.

(Reported for the Times.)

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